

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /031 W

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O P 261403Z FEB 74

FM USINT DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 110

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

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EXDIS

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DEPT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY ABOARD SAM 86970

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: BEIRUT DAILY START ARTICLE ON US POLICY

1. IN COURSE OF LAST FEW DAYS, I HAVE BEEN INUNDATED BY SCORES OF NEWSMEN WHO HAVE BEEN PLAGUING ME FOR THE SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE AS WELL AS GENERAL BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS. I HAVE NOT RPT NOT REVEALED ANYTHING ABOUT SECRETARY'S TRAVEL PLANS OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT HE IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE SOMETIME TODAY WITH NO COMMENTS WHATSOEVER ON SECRETARY'S FUTURE PLANS. I HAVE, HOWEVER, PROVIDED GENERAL OFF-THE-RECORD BACKGROUNDER AGAIN LIMITING MYSELF TO GENERAL STATEMENTS BASED ON PUBLICLY-ANNOUNCED DEPARTMENTAL POSITIONS.

2. YESTERDAY, FEB 25, I WAS APPROACHED BY KATHLEEN PHIPPS OF THE BEIRUT DAILY STAR WHO ASKED ME FOR A "FEW MINUTES." DURING THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION, I GAVE HER WHAT I THOUGHT WAS AN OFFICIAL OFF-THE-RECORD BACKGROUNDER. (SHE ASKED ME IF SHE COULD TAPE IT AND I AGREE ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT I NOT BE QUOTED.) THIS MORNING'S DAILY STAR CARRIES STORY UNDER HEADING "US ENVOY REJECTS MEIR'S GOLAN STANCE." IN THE STORY I AM CITED BY NAME AND QUOTED DIRECTLY. INTER ALIA, I AM ALLEGED TO HAVE SAID THAT "MRS. MEIR'S STATEMENT CONCERNING

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GOLAN WAS DEFINITELY NOT US POLICY" AND THAT "IF THE

PALESTINIANS DO NOT ACCEPT A NEW STATE ON WEST BANK AND GAZA, THIS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSE PROBLEMS IN ANY MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT." THESE STATEMENTS ARE EITHER TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT OR MISQUOTED.

3. THUS FAR, I HAVE BEEN CONTACTED ONLY BY AN AP STRINGER WHO ASKED ME TO COMMENT ON THE ARTICLE. I TOLD HIM THAT MY MEETING WITH MISS PHIPPS WAS STRICTLY FOR BACKGROUND PURPOSES AND THAT I HAD NOT GRANTED HER AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW AS SHE ALLEGES IN THE ARTICLE. BEYOND THAT I SAID I COULD NOT COMMENT ON USG POLICY WHICH IS ONLY OFFICIALLY FORMULATED IN WASHINGTON.

4. I DEEPLY REGRET THIS AFFAIR AND I CLAIM FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY STUPIDITY IN ALLOWING MYSELF TO BE HOODWINKED IN THIS MANNER.
SCOTES

NOTE BY OCT: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER STANDING INSTRUCTIONS FROM S/S-O.

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